Crossing Thresholds

Opening Plenary:

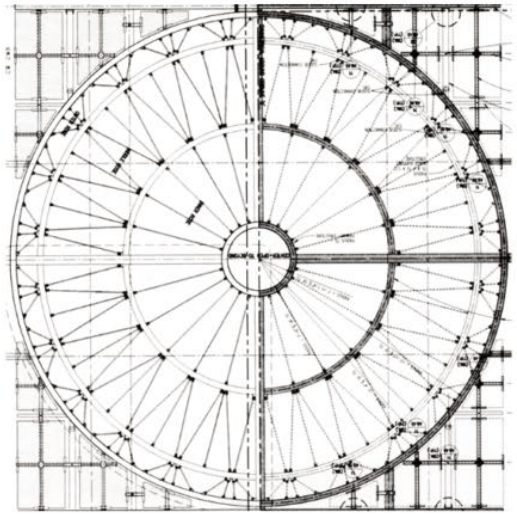
Wisdom School at Saint Mark's

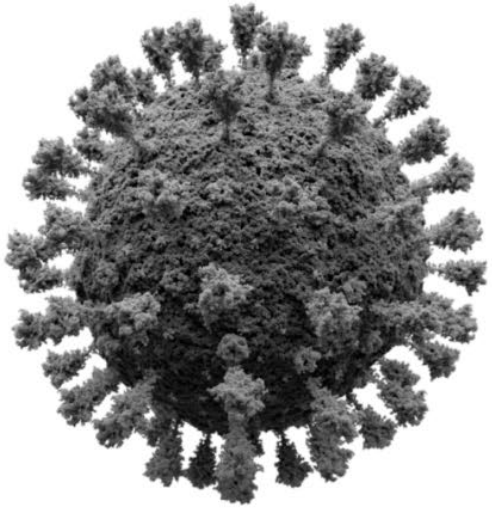
Steven L. Thomason

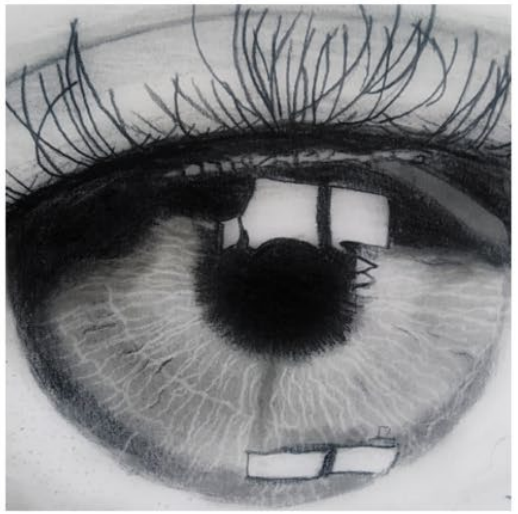
September 17, 2025

THE WISDOM SCHOOL

AT SAINT MARK'S CATHEDRAL







What is the Wisdom School?

Our mission is to Offer a balanced path for spiritual transformation grounded in prayer and practice, drawing on the Christian contemplative tradition while respecting the diversity of experiences born from contemplative practices of other traditions.”

The space for reasoned discourse, lifelong learning, and spiritual renewal is held sacred for all seekers, whether they worship at the cathedral or not.

Upcoming Events

Naming Our Thresholds

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025, 6:45-8:15 P.M.
in person in Bloedel Hall and online via Zoom

FACILITATED BY THE REV. CANON EMILY GRIFFIN

Upcoming Events

The Somatic Enneagram: *Listening to the Wisdom of the Body*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2025, 6:30-8:30 P.M.
***and* SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025, 9:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.**
in person in Bloedel Hall and online via Zoom

FACILITATED BY ALICIA DIVERS

Upcoming Events

AN ADVENT QUIET MORNING

Between Two Worlds: *Thresholds of Expectant Hope in Advent*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025, 9 A.M.–12:30 P.M.
in person in Bloedel Hall and online via Zoom
WITH THE VERY REV. KATE MOOREHEAD CARROLL

Wisdom School 2026

- **Wilderness Spirituality, Bishop LaBelle**

  Sat. Jan. 10, 2025, 9 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

- **Silence and Honey Cakes: *Lessons from the Desert for Modern Communities*, Sr. Miriam Elizabeth Bledsoe**

  Sat. Feb. 21, 2025, 8:30 A.M.-12 P.M.

- **The Amazing Grace of Celtic Spirituality and Its Relevance in Our World Today, Deirdre Ni Chinneide**

  Sat. Mar. 21, 2025, 9 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

- **Grief as a Threshold Experience, Canon Rich Weyls**

  Wed. Apr. 22, 2026, 6:45-8:15 P.M.

- **Write Around the Corner, The Rev. Mary Lindberg**

  Sat. May2, 2026, 9 A.M.-12 P.M.

Radix Groups Forming Now…

- In 2019, the Radix Project was launched to invite adult participants into small groups for scripture study and prayer in a space intended to foster trust and connection with one another and God. Radix participants commit to meeting once weekly for six weeks in small group setting, and across ten series now, several hundred have participated in at least one group.

THE RADIX PROJECT

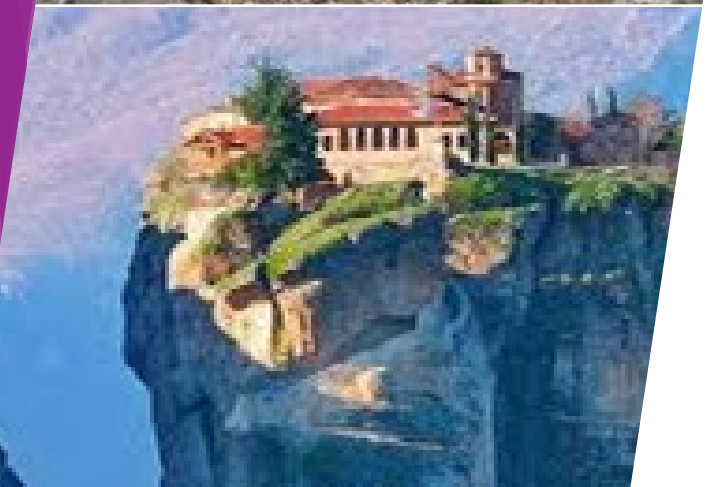
small groups/deep roots

Center for Spirituality and Action

- At the heart of the Center's offerings are yearlong cohorts—small, intentional groups that gather regularly for prayer, study, mutual support, retreats, and service. The first cohort launched in Fall 2024. Two more began in Fall 2025. The next cohort begins in January 2026.

- Application deadline: December 10, 2025

- Apply now at: saintmarks.org/csa-apply



Crossing Thresholds: Capstone Pilgrimage

Following in Footsteps of Paul

October 8-19, 2026

Led by Steve Thomason

Theme for the Year: Crossing Thresholds

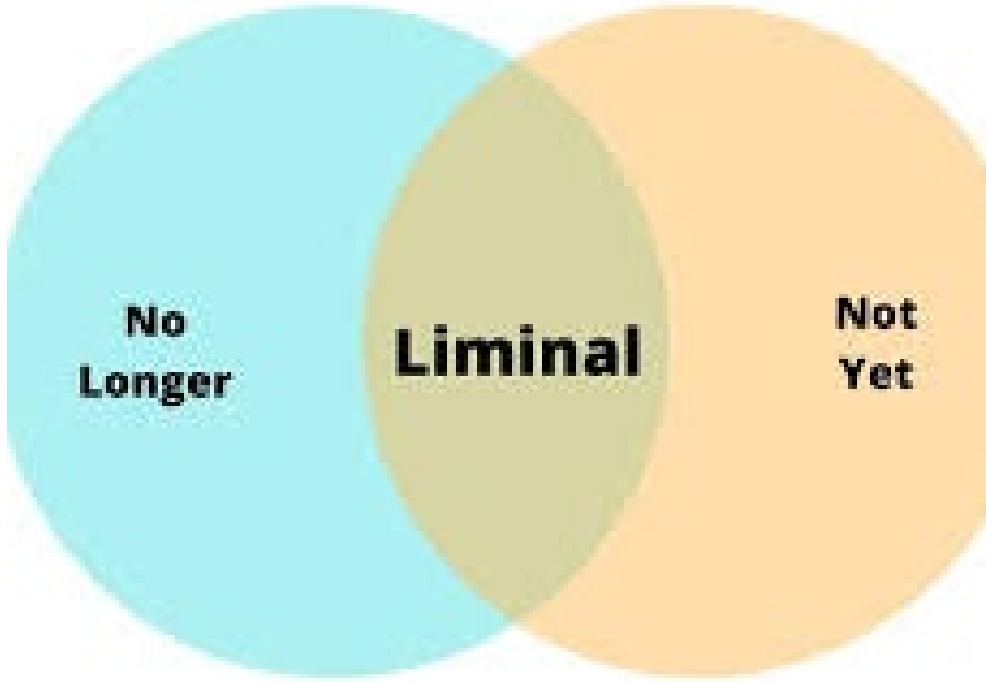
liminality (from Latin *limen* 'a threshold')

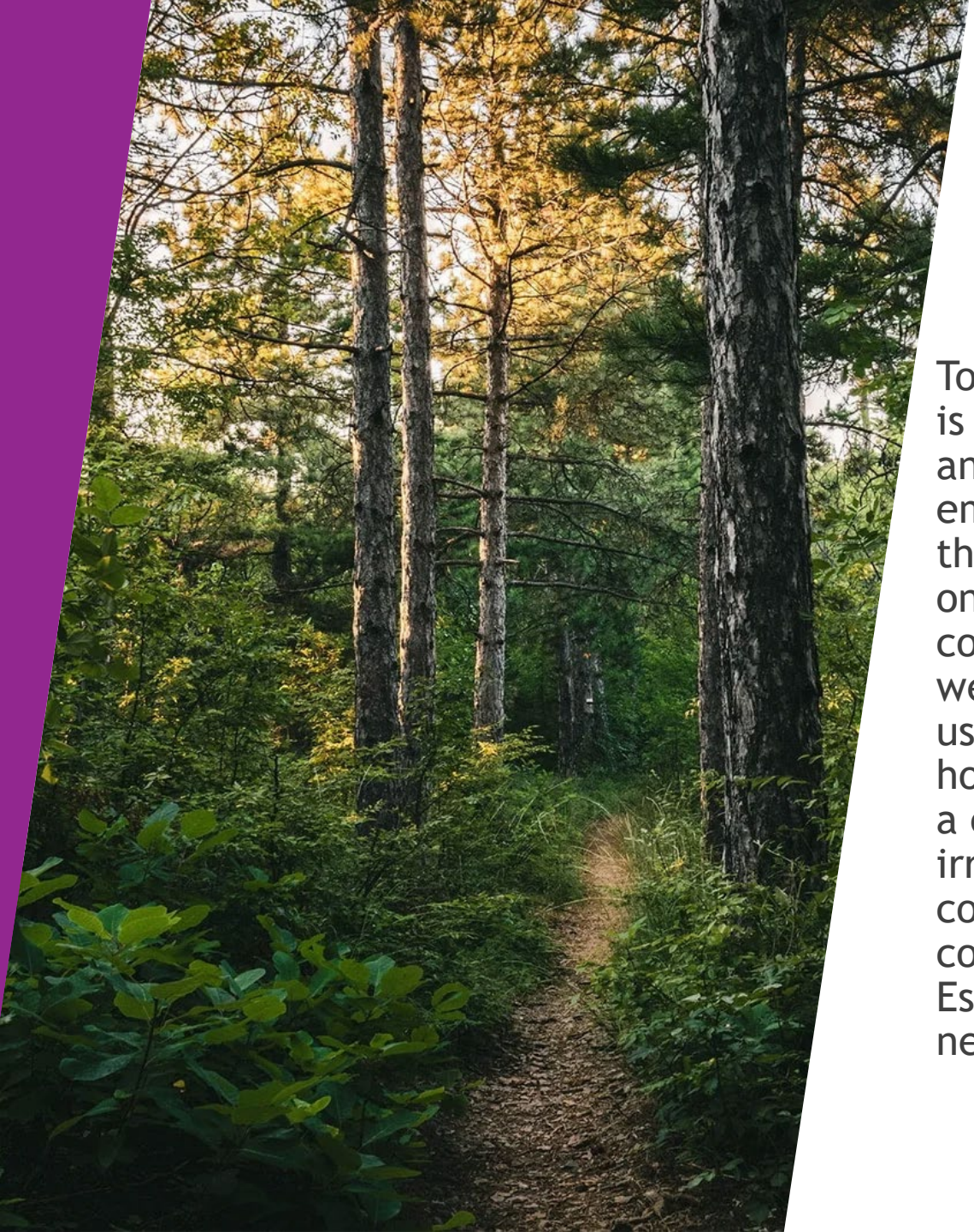
Liminality and the “Cloud of Unknowing”

- liminality is “the unique spiritual situation that human beings do not want to be in but God tends to lead us there…We arrive at this place when we are between an old comfort zone and any new possibility, and if we are not trained in how to hold anxiety, how to live with ambiguity, how to trust and wait, we will constantly try to escape or do anything we can to avoid facing this intolerable state of unknowing.”

-

Richard Rohr, Falling Upward





Crossing Thresholds

To acknowledge and cross a new threshold is always a challenge. It demands courage and also a sense of trust in whatever is emerging. This becomes essential when a threshold opens suddenly in front of you, one for which you had no preparation. This could be illness, suffering or loss. Because we are so engaged with the world, we usually forget how fragile life can be and how vulnerable we always are. It takes only a couple of seconds for a life to change irreversibly. Suddenly you stand on completely strange ground and a new course of life has to be embraced. Especially at such times we desperately need blessing and protection.

-John O'Donohue,

To Bless the Space Between Us

Rites of Passage—Arnold von Gennep

Three stages

- Preliminal rites of separation (dying to the old ways)
- Liminal rites of transition (deconstruction)
- Post-liminal rites of incorporation (new being)

Breakout groups

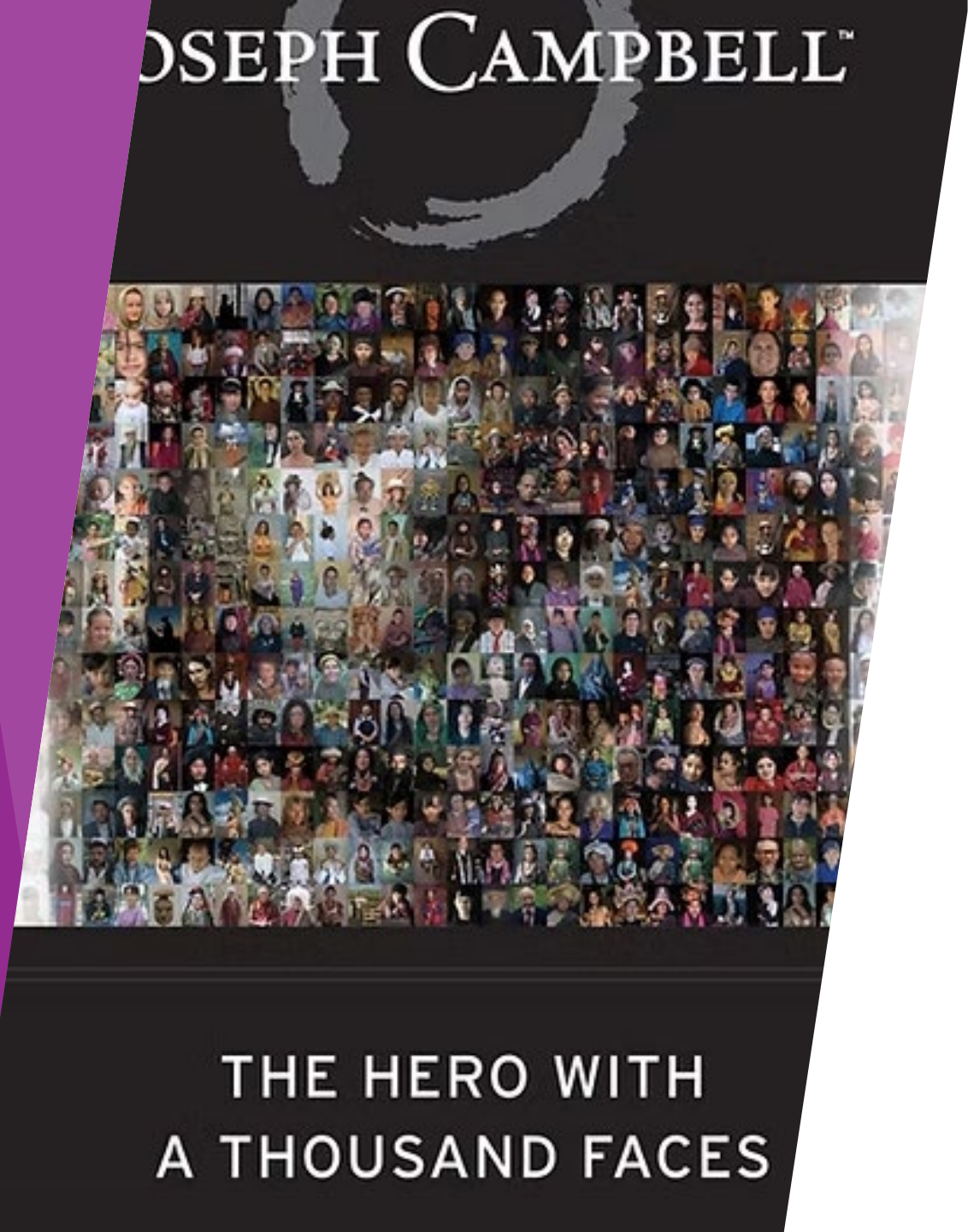
- What are some examples of Rites of Passages familiar to us, and do they follow this three-fold staging?

Liminality is not risk-free…

- False options are available to us
- Jungian archetypal imagery of the trickster
- Not external…

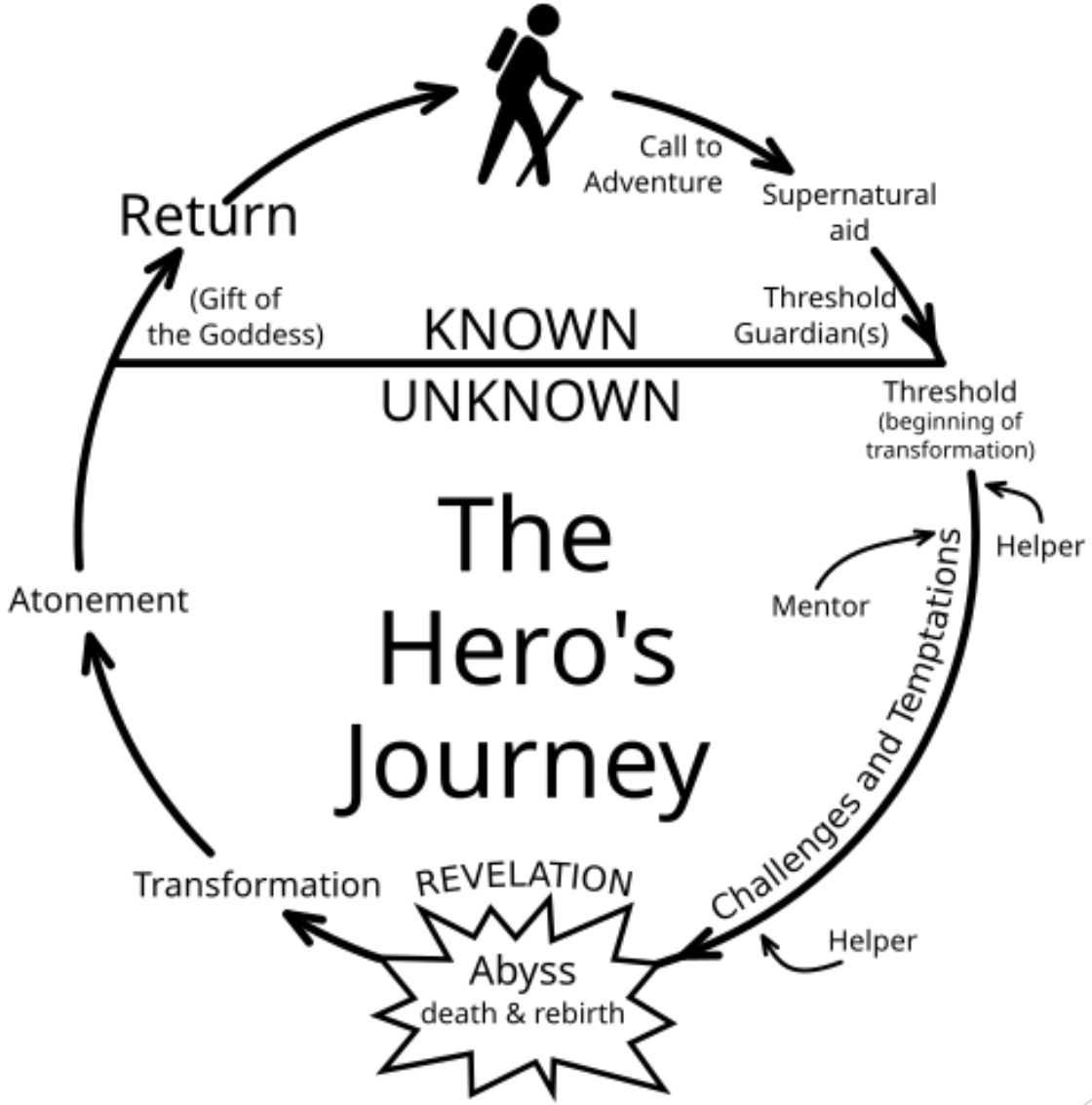
We bring our wounds with us… And healing is a hard journey

- What we do with our pain matters…
- Rohr: If we can see our "wounds" as *the way through*, as Jesus did, then they would become sacred wounds rather than scars to deny, disguise, or project onto others.
- Only *healers who have fully faced their wounds are able to help heal anyone else*.
- ***If we don't transform our pain, we will transmit it.***

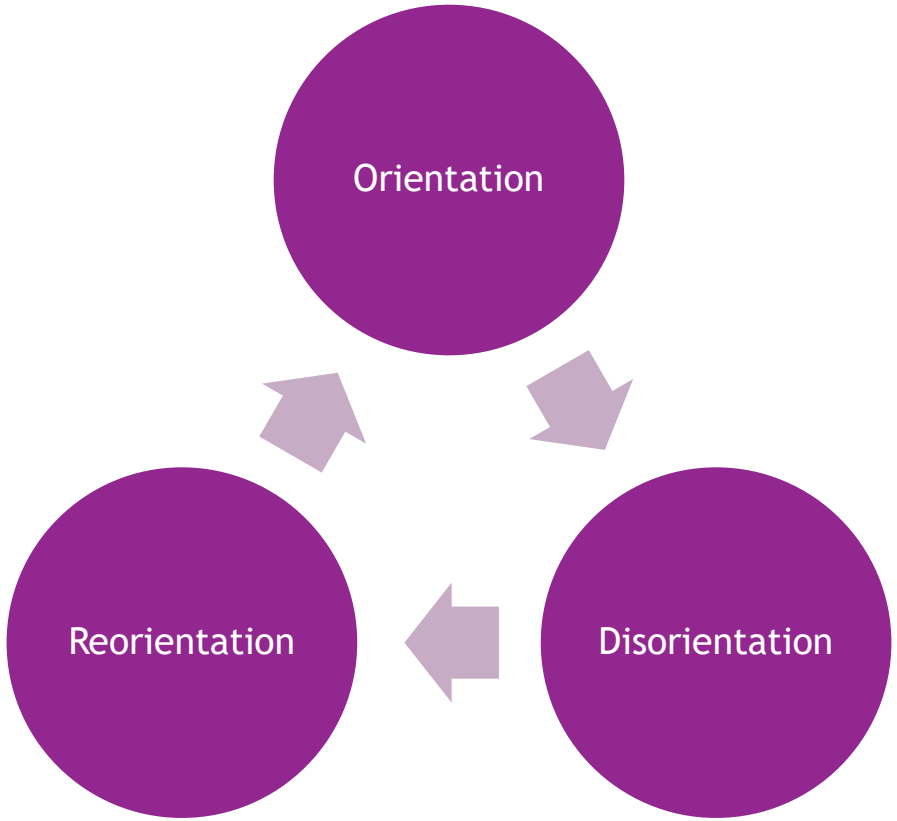


The Hero's Journey, Joseph Campbell

The Hero’s Journey



This Same Pattern Undergirds our Sacramental Identity



Baptism (Romans 6:4)
"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death…that as Christ was raised from the dead…we too might walk in newness of life."

Eucharist
--God created the world as good
--We lost our way and corrupted it
--Christ helps in redemptive love to set it right again (foretaste)

Monastic Practice of Statio (Pausing)

- *a way to remind ourselves of the holiness of transitions*
- calls us to a sense of reverence for slowness, for mindfulness, and for the fertile dark spaces between our goals where we can pause and center ourselves, and listen.
- open up a space within
- for God to work.

-Christine Valters Paintner,

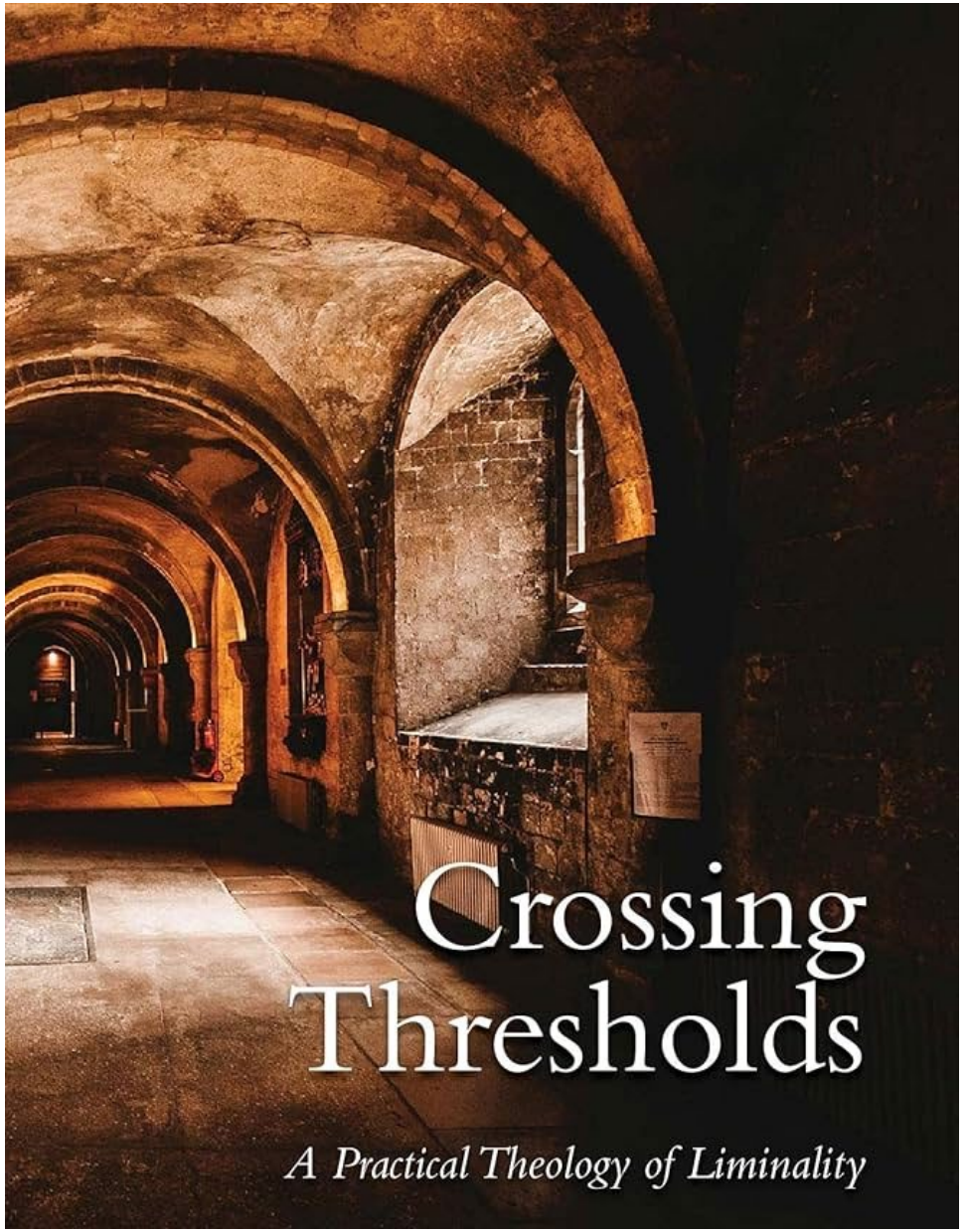
The Soul's Slow Ripening: 12 Celtic Practices for Seeking the Sacred

A Celtic Consideration: Crossing Thresholds as Spiritual Practice

- Count the physical thresholds you cross during the day. Notice how many times you have to move from one type of place to another.
- Consciously step over a threshold. Start with the same foot each time. This simple practice will bring your attention to where and who you are in the present. It can also help bring you into the Presence.
- Pause at the threshold. You may want to bow or say a short prayer. Use the pause to focus on your intention for the next moments. This is an especially valuable practice when you are entering a place of prayer.
- Sit on a threshold. See how it feels to inhabit two worlds with your body. Realize that the inner and the outer are always available to you.

Breakout group

- Which of these models resonate with you?
- How might you embrace the ambiguity of crossing thresholds as sacred work and an important part of the spiritual journey?
- Can you see “union with God” as the truest threshold for us all?



Toward a Synthesis for Spiritual Meaning

- Journey to the borderlands
- Tricksters seeking shortcuts or redirects
- God yearns for us to go there, but never forces us
- are we willing to step across the threshold and become the ones God is yearning for us to be?

Upcoming Events

Naming Our Thresholds

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025, 6:45-8:15 P.M.
in person in Bloedel Hall and online via Zoom

FACILITATED BY THE REV. CANON EMILY GRIFFIN

Thresholds are places for entering and leaving—for moving from one kind of space or time to another. We make these kinds of transitions throughout our lives but often don't know how to prepare for them, mark them, or discern the shape of our lives in light of them. In this session, we will share tools for narrating our own life stories and explore how our shared story as Christians helps us make meaning of our endings that are also new beginnings.